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ABSTRACT

A 13-day workshop was conducted in Nigeria to train 60 community development workers in the educational use of popular theater for community-based adult education. Key goals were conscientization (a gradual learning process in which people look critically at their social situation to gain deeper understanding of the root causes of their problems) and participation (learners shaping and controlling the learning situation as a first step toward controlling their lives). The workshop used the Kwagh-hir, part of the Tiv peoples' tradition of public theatrical performance, combining traditional ritual and modern theater, and using a narrator, musicians, acrobats, dancers, and a puppet show in a performance on an open space in the village. After 3 days of training in crucial African theater elements (dance, music, singing, and drums), workshop participants applied their training in three Tiv villages. An inventory of village problems was made, anecdotes acted out and edited, public rehearsals held (with much input from villagers), local musicians involved, and finally performances held, then evaluated. The dual goal of the workshop was conscientization of Tiv villagers and of workshop trainees, to respect the villagers, listen to them, learn about their problems, and incorporate these problems in creative dramatizations to involve the Tiv in community introspection and analysis. (MH)

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OCCASIONAL PAPER #10

TRAINING POPULAR THEATER TRAINERS: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA

Kees P. Epskamp

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OCCASIONAL PAPER #10

TRAINING POPULAR THEATER TRAINERS: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA

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[1982]

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FOREWORD

Through its series of Occasional Papers, the NFE Information Center seeks to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas among those pioneering in the study and practice of non-formal education. In dynamic, relatively new fields of inquiry and experimentation, it is especially important to bring "ideas in progress" to the light of collegial scrutiny. We intend the papers in this series to provoke critical discussion and to contribute to the growth of knowledge about non-formal education.

This paper describes the use of popular theatre as a strategy for adult education in local-level community development. Based on the author's experience as a resource person in a training workshop in Nigeria, we see how theatrical elements such as singing, dancing, puppetry, and narrative art are applied in a mutual effort by community development trainers and villagers to bring to light social problems and stimulate corrective action. In cultures which traditionally use theater as a vehicle for social expression, community development trainers can gain valuable insight into a people's attitudes and behaviors by studying the form and content of local public performances. Based on these observations and discussions with villagers about their

interests and concerns, trainers can then incorporate educational messages into simple and entertaining theatrical productions. The key to the success of this strategy rests on its capacity to foster high levels of community participation.

We are most grateful to the author for bringing his work to our attention and for allowing us to share it with development planners and practitioners in the NFE Network. Our special thanks go to Lela Vandenberg and Karen Collamore Sullivan, both members of the NFE Center staff, for their editorial assistance.

As always, we invite your comments and contributions to enrich the dialogue concerning important issues in non-formal education.

Mary Joy Pigozzi, Director

Non-Formal Education Information Center

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INTRODUCTION

This paper describes a workshop, conducted in Nigeria, designed to train people involved in community development in the educational use of popular theater. As a strategy for community-based adult education, popular theater--or people's theater--is often used to initiate a process of conscientization. "Conscientization" refers to a gradual learning process in which people look critically at their social situation in order to gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of their problems. People engage in this process through dialogue or group discussion stimulated by key-words, pictures, stories, or dramatizations representing significant shared problems. The process of conscientization is based on the premise that with an increased critical understanding of their social environment, people can increase their control over their own lives, and thus their ability to effect positive changes. Participation is a key component in this process. It is the learners who shape and control the learning situation as a first step toward controlling their lives; and it is their knowledge, experiences, needs and problems which provide the substance and form the core of the overall process.

The use of popular theater as a vehicle for education in local-level community development seems especially appropriate

in areas of the world where theater is a culturally established form of social expression. The Tiv peoples of Nigeria[1] have a rich tradition of public theatrical performance. In discussing the Workshop, the paper also details the application, by the trainees, of this approach in several Tiv communities. The Workshop aimed to teach the trainees to respect the Tiv villagers, to listen to them, to learn about their problems, and to incorporate these problems in creative dramatizations so as to involve the Tiv in community introspection and analysis. In this sense a dual goal--the conscientization of the Workshop trainees as well as of the Tiv communities they worked with--guided the process.

This paper is based on an eye-witness report of the author who participated as a resource person in the First Benue International Popular Theatre Workshop for Development, organized by the Benue Council for Arts and Culture in Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria, from 28 December 1981 until 9 January 1982.

BACKGROUND

All Nigerian states have their own Council for Arts and Culture. In general these councils are meant to preserve the local culture. The main activities of such a council consist primarily of organizing traditional performances or parades for visitors and tourists, promoting or preserving the production of traditional artifacts, and booking local singing and dancing groups to welcome dignitaries at the airport. The Council for Arts and Culture of Benue State gradually became aware of the existence of three interrelated forms of cultural expression: operative traditional culture, elitist westernized culture, and popular contemporary culture (or 'people's' culture). Seeing the need to support popular culture, the Council adopted a new strategy to serve and sustain not only traditional folklore and culture, but also the prevailing cultural expressions of the rural populations, including the Tiv, a local ethnic group.

For this reason the Benue Arts Council organized a course for its own staff members and for a number of staff members from the Ministry for Social Welfare, Youth, Sports and Culture. In addition to these officials, others who took part included students of social academies, health care workers, and regional radio officials. The course was led by teachers from Ahmadu Bello University in the city of Zaria acting as 'resource people'[(2)].

Participants were trained in the use of theater for educational purposes and for conscientization . They learned how to use locally existing theatrical elements (for example, singing, dancing, and music) to produce a performance; they learned how to write a scenario and how to apply a simple analysis in the villages in order to obtain subject matter for the plays. They were also trained in working together with the people during improvisations. Thus, a constant interaction with the local Tiv communities was stimulated. For the students, this workshop was meant as a 'training of trainers'; for the local people, as 'instruction and entertainment'.

The results of this type of workshop depend mainly on the motivation of the individual participants. There is a clear discrepancy between participants sent by their employer and those who take part on a voluntary basis. Some of the participants were very content with their office jobs in the urban centers and openly averse to going back into the villages and talking to the Tiv. Others, like the regional radio associate, would preferably start tomorrow to train his own people in this way; for instance to make up radio plays together with the villagers at local cultural events, to be recorded for direct broadcasting. Whatever the intentions of the participants, they all received a certificate of attendance at the end of the course.

According to the course coordinator, Michael Etherton, such a seminar, including the performances, is certainly not a final product for the participants. It is a stage they reach in their personal development as trainers. However, to the people in the local communities the performances are a single experience. Therefore, the villagers have a right to see a final product, a performance which is amusing as well as a stimulus to conscientization. That is why the performances deal with the social problems in the villages. Since the real object is to motivate the community to discussion and action by means of theater, a number of realistic alternatives for action are shown during the rehearsals and the performance. The choice whether or not to act is left to the villagers themselves.

In order to raise the critical consciousness of the local inhabitants, some of the rehearsals are held in public on the village-green. According to the Brazilian theater director, Augusto Boal, these rehearsals are the most important contributions to the inhabitants' process of conscientization . Again and again, passers-by are questioned whether what they see on stage also applies to their own situation: are there any elements that should be omitted or added? By choosing this approach the actors hope to avoid the reaction: "Oh, here comes another bunch that insists on developing us. Let's go and hear what they have to say this time." That is why the plays

are realistic and funny and offer a multiple choice of alternatives for action. Moralism, right versus wrong, is avoided. The build-up, design, and themes of the plays are as similar as possible to the way the Tiv are used to making and watching their own theatrical performances, and the final performance depends on their participation as the audience.

KWAGH-HIR

The Tiv, like many non-Western peoples, use all sorts of theatrical elements such as singing, dancing, music, drama, and narrative art in their rituals, feasts, and 'leisure' time activities to give expression to their traditions. Not all peoples in Nigeria appreciate this kind of extrovert behavior. In Hausa-land, theater, on the whole, is not very popular. The Islamic section of the population considers theater to be exhibitionistic. For instance, drums are forbidden. The Tiv, on the other hand, have an extensive oral and acoustic culture. In their music, consisting mainly of drum-rolls, they use rhythms to communicate messages incomprehensible to the outsider. For centuries the drums in Tiv-land took the place of our telephone. Even today, hollow trunks serve old men who know the rhythm and the timbre of the codes, as a means of signalling messages across hundreds of miles of land. These signals often go much

faster than a message sent by car. "Find the right tone and they will know" is the advice of the chief to his elder.

Ever since the sixties there has existed in a large number of rural communities in Tiv-land an indigenous and authentic form of theater, namely, Kwagh-hir[3]. It is a mixture of traditional ritual elements and modern theatrical effects, a kind of whirling 'vaudeville' program with a narrator, acrobats, dancers, a puppet-show, whims and fancies, anecdotes and tales. In these programs, themes dealing with traditionalism and modernization are inter-twined. Performances enacted on an open space in the village can take as long as three hours or more. This theater is by nature and tradition 'theater in the round'. The audience, which varies between 200 and 1500 people, sits or stands around the stage and constitutes the side-wings.

The Kwagh-hir came into being as a result of the Tiv-riots in the sixties. In that time, generation conflicts (modernization vs tradition; young vs old)[4] turned into rather bloody political party conflicts. One day an influential Tiv-elder claimed to have had a dream containing a message from the ancestors. According to this dream, generation conflicts were caused by the fact that the Tiv failed to honor their ancestors in the proper way. This negligence could be corrected by creating a new sort of performance, a kind of compromise between traditional ritual and modern theater. This would require an informal organization

at the village level in which young and old would give this dream their best. In this way the generation conflict was sublimated. Sometimes the conflict can still be felt when the performances are interrupted by spontaneous initiatives of young people who enter the arena dressed in jeans and start a kind of ring-dance.

The following description is of an actual performance which took place at night. A chorus of women and children sits down, as well as the orchestra consisting of drums, rattles, and a few gongs. The singing starts. Bundles of long grass are brought which, when lit, serve as illumination. The man in charge of lighting starts a small fire with which he kindles the bundles of grass to illuminate the scene. Not only for the light, but also for his funny role, is he crucial to the performance. Between acts he does all sorts of circus-like tricks with the fire. He imitates the dancers and ridicules people in the audience, his burlesque whims and satire functioning as interludes between the scenes. Besides the light-man, there is a formal narrator who goes into the circle of the audience in between acts, and introduces the next item repetitively, with much mimicry and a large number of amusing comments.

Then the spectacle begins. In this first scene, one can hardly speak of a plot; it is rather meant as a comic image. A mythical person fully dressed in raffia enters the stage, his impressive and athletic dance raising the dust on the nightly

square. Spooky shadows are caused by the burning torches. Next enters a box, the size of an altar, with two slits on top not visible to the audience. In the box there are two puppet-players. A doll portraying a traditional chief appears from one of the slits, with real smoking coming out of his pipe. Then again a solo dancer dressed as a mythical animal shuffles alongside the audience in some sort of bag made of sheets with a head cut out of wood on top. He is accompanied by the light-man. Three times he somersaults and lands on his knees in front of someone in the audience. He starts to shake his whole body like in a trance, accompanied and encouraged by the drum-roll. This manner of ridiculing someone in the audience is accepted with laughter.

Now there starts a musical intermezzo, consisting of chorus songs conducted and backed by the orchestra. Meanwhile, the narrator jokes with the audience and the puppetry comes back on stage. This time, a copied miniature 'volkswagen' is shown; it can go forwards and backwards while all sorts of lights within the car flicker. Then another puppet scene starts. It takes place close to water and the setting is fully decorated with freshly picked greens. First, a gold-painted male doll appears, followed by a red-painted nude woman doll. Now and again, the woman raises her hands, thus revealing her pubic hair. When the woman disappears there is suddenly an eighty inch long snake hissing among the greens, trying to crawl off the box in the

direction of the audience. The snake looks so real that the audience is frightened. Then a second snake appears and we see a spectacular faked fight between the two.

The performance ends with the entrance of a creature entirely made of raffia with an enormous mouth. This gigantic costume or ritual mask is moved by two dancers. Several times the creature runs into the arena and starts to shake, then collapses in the sand. It threatens to run into the audience twice, which increases the general hilarity. In former years and in the original ritual from which this mythical figure was taken, a child was finally brought into the arena to be swallowed by the creature.

The Kwagh-hir companies consist of about 30 to 40 men and women, per village. Wood-cutters, puppet-players, musicians, singers, dancers, narrators, and such take part in these companies. It is a very strong informal organization at the village-level. Villages sometimes organize entire Kwagh-hir nights, during which guest companies from other villages are invited and a sort of festival is created. To honor the First Benue International Popular Theatre Workshop for Development, the Arts Council of Benue State had organized such a two-day festival. About fifteen groups from the surrounding area of Gboko, where the workshop took place, participated. There was a prize for the best Kwagh-hir performance. This element of competition is characteristic of the Tiv culture. As a matter of fact the festivals that are organized

by the villagers themselves are also a kind of contest for the most original contributions. The fact that more than 10,000 people visited this festival shows that the Kwagh-hir forms part of a living culture.

STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

The Benue Workshop aimed to demonstrate the use of these traditional theater companies to identify current local issues and to involve local people in exploring the origins of their problems. Based on similar workshops conducted first in Botswana and then in other African countries, the Benue Workshop consisted in thirteen days of experiential learning. According to Ross Kidd[5], 'theater for development' is a process, and the best way to learn the process is to go through it. Therefore, during the Workshop the participants learn the skills (village research, problem analysis, drama-making, theatrical skills, performance organization, discussion, and evaluation), not in isolation from, but in relation to a practical, operational context, i.e., carrying out a small, community-based 'theater for development' project.

The first day was an introductory day. The sixty participants were divided into three groups, with those that spoke Tiv proportionally assigned to each. On the second and third days

three tutors gave elementary training, according to the Botswana popular theater model, in the three crucial African theater elements: dance, music and singing, and drama. On the fourth day the three groups separately left for one of the following Tiv communities: Igyura, Akpagher, and Masaj, all in the surrounding area of Gboko. In these villages the groups introduced themselves and explained to local community members what they intended to do. Also permission was asked from the chief to do such theatrical work. After that the participants divided themselves into little groups and talked with the villagers about prevalent problems in the village. In this way an inventory of problems was made. At the end of the day the participants met to discuss what they had discovered. The list of problems was analyzed and structured. A provisional selection of problems to be dealt with was made.

Improvisation was the agenda for the fifth day. Certain anecdotes told by the villagers were acted out. The most important and successful scenes were reported. At the end of the day a second selection of useful material was made.

The sixth day was devoted to roughly editing the scenes, creating a story-line, making up a plot and analyzing the main characters. On the seventh day there was a brief rehearsal in the morning, and at noon this rough form was shown to fellow participants, while in the afternoon the play was presented in the villages as a public rehearsal. The eighth and ninth days

were spent working on the completion of the play with the comments received the day before from the villagers. Singing, dancing, music and further action were added. The tenth day was used to acquire additional information about the problems dealt with from the local authorities (action research). They verified the information given in the play, settled the technical aspects (e.g. lighting) of the performances, and invited local musicians to participate in the performances. On the eleventh and the twelfth days the performances were shown in the three villages at night. Each performance consisted of the three different plays by the three separate groups of participants. The entire performance took about three hours, nothing compared to the Kwagh-hir performances which go on till late at night. The final day was occupied by a full meeting in which the findings and experiences of the participants were exchanged. The general wind-up of the course was made at the end of the day.

FROM PROBLEM-DEFINITION TO PERFORMANCE

The most important themes that were dealt with in the workshop and in the final performances were modernization versus traditionalism, young versus old, and problems concerning cooperativism, land-reclamation by the government, the lack of fertilizers and water, runaway wives, the disturbance of polygamy, and the

bribing of officials. Even though bribing is a common thing in everyday life in Nigeria, the villagers would rather not see this corruption on stage.

That such problems not be looked upon as separate anecdotes was an aim of the course facilitators. They urged the participants of the Workshop, and later the audience, to attempt a deeper analysis of these problems to show their internal cohesion. Why does a man beat his wife? Because she stays away at night to get water at the well. Why do women at the well fight? Because there is a lack of water. Why is there a lack of water? Because the money meant to build a communal well has disappeared. Why has the money disappeared? Because there is a tendency to corruption, in which economical and political interests play a part. So when the women are fed-up with the village situation because they can no longer perform their domestic tasks (like fetching water), and when they get beat up by their husbands on top of that, then they have reason enough to run away from the village and start working in towns.

By this type of analysis the problem of run-away women is not only explained in psychological terms, but also in terms of the socio-economic context. This may create the illusion that the performances are dull and straightforward--not at all. The quarrels of the women at the well, the emptying of each other's buckets, women getting beaten up by their husbands, men starting to fight in a

bar while the bartender tries to save his liquor and glasses as quickly as he can, all these elements form an organic entity, and are extremely funny. Furthermore, they are familiar, and this heightens the relevance of the play.

To give an impression of how a play is structured, what follows is the concise content of a play performed in Masaj village and based on its problems.

Scene 1: Three neighbors are discussing the lack of fertilizer. The most agitated farmer calls for his wife to bring two 'yams'(6). A little and big yam are shown. The little one is from land where no fertilizer was used and the big one from land where fertilizer was used. One of the neighbors states that he is lucky because at least he got one sack of fertilizer. The others have no fertilizer at all. The lack of fertilizer is considered to be a problem which should be presented to the chief.

Scene 2: The chief holds audience. Next to him is seated an elder of the council of elders who is acting as adviser. This elder will not hear of the problem. The yams do not grow because the ancestors are not properly honored, he says. "Sacrifice a goat to the ancestors, and you will see that you will have big yams again". No one has ever heard of the 'god of the fertilizer', he continues. The chief tries to reconcile

the two parties (tradition vs modernization). He proposes to found a traditional savings-cooperative and to send a representative with the collected money to town to buy fertilizer[7]. He makes the same elder beat the drum to call the villagers together.

Scene 3: The villagers meet and approve of the plan. The chief calls the educated son of another elder. Everybody knows this successful youngster. This boy has been to school and in the army, so he knows the world outside the village. Money is collected. Everybody pays his share except the old adviser. The community agrees that the boy will go and order fertilizer.

Scene 4: The Tiv-farmer who took the initiative in the first scene, pays tribute to the chief, accompanied by his wife. She carries big yams . The chief praises him and the entire village is happy that there will be food again. Now they can at least invite a neighboring community as their guest. The elder at the chief's side is sulking.

Scene 5: The chief holds audience again. A farmer returns his fertilizer. Since the government has confiscated his land he does not need it any more. The chief tells the farmer to have a chat with his extended family; surely they will provide him with a piece of land. Another farmer arrives with another problem. The government also took his land and gave him a certain compensation. With this money

he bought himself a passenger bus. The driver, however, wrecked the car and now the owner is unemployed. The otherwise so silent conservative elder starts to laugh. "That's what comes from all this modern stuff: first you buy a car and now you have no food. Are you trying to feed your children luxury?" The bus-owner gets angry. The chief placates. The advise is: "Borrow a small amount of money; have a large bowl of beer brewed, organize a party, tell your problems to the guests and everybody will leave some money so that you can make a fresh start."

Scene 6: The three farmers from scene 1 are back together. Again there is no fertilizer. "You know why? Because that boy in charge of the savings-cooperative was found in town, drunk and surrounded by prostitutes while squandering the savings." The farmers get angry, run to the house of the boy and want to beat him up. They reconsider in the end and go to the chief. They demand that the boy be taken to court. However, the chief will not allow this. This kind of internal affair among 'his children' needs to be solved within the village and not by the federal court. In short, the police are kept out of the village affairs, and the chief gives the pincher a scolding.

Scene 7: The chief has the following proposal: an adviser of the local agricultural extension office should come and establish an official cooperative for the purchase of fertilizer.

> Everybody agrees, except the stubborn elder. The adviser enters, carrying a cardboard suitcase with a panther print. The chief addresses him in English and translates into Tiv for his own people on stage and at the same time for the audience. The extension officer answers all the questions from the villagers with "no problem". The mood heightens, the extension officer is invited to dinner. As is custom in the hospitable Tiv-culture, the officer is shown the goat before it is slaughtered for the feast. Local beer-brew is fetched, a toast to the ancestors is accomplished by touching the gourd on the ground (a kind of libation). A farmer starts to sing, the chief joins him. The song is about the resistance to fertilizer by the traditional Tiv. At first the sulky elder opposes this blasphemic nonsense. Slowly the farmers get up and the play ends in a slow traditional ring-dance. The dancers leave the side-wings formed by the audience.

The scenery in this play is a shady tree. Few props are used: an upside down chair functions as a drum; an old army helmet which happened to be lying about on the village square represents the goat which is presented to the extension officer; the yams used in the play are borrowed from the local people; and a pipe is made out of a piece of paper.

At times traditional customs handicap the actors in playing, for example, the acceptance of food. Traditionally this is always done with the right hand; this hand is pure whereas the other one, the left, is impure. Whenever the scene demands that an actor offer something to another, this is also done with the right hand, recognizing tradition rather than stage rules to prevent "upstaging". Another handicap might be traditional social relationships. One of the participants in the course, a young Tiv prince, found it difficult to play the young agitator against the sulky elder. According to Western perceptions, still another handicap might be the noise and movement of the audience. Members of the audience, either sitting or standing, walk off at times, come back, fetch something to eat, and so on. This is the way in which they have got used to attending such long performances. The bar owners and the female peddlers take their drinks and their goodies and go into the audience. When there are shouts for beer on the other side of the stage, the merchant is not afraid of walking across the stage right through the scene.

At this sort of performance it is rare for chiefs and elders to come and watch. At times it is too embarrassing for these authorities to see themselves depicted on stage. When they do come it is out of politeness and they usually disappear after watching two scenes.

In general, onlookers very much enjoy the public rehearsals that are held on the village square. Their comments are integrated afterwards into the play. There were also spontaneous forms of audience participation. The conservative elder in the play reported above, for instance, was considered to be very funny, exactly because of his stereotype conservatism. However, an elder in the audience expressed straightforward criticism of the conduct of the elder on stage. When finally within the play there was a collection in order to buy fertilizer in town, the audience gathered tree leaves off the ground and gave those as their financial contribution to the actors.

The performance tuned to the problems of Akpagher village was focused on the water problem. The wells in this village were all dried up, so the village had collected 6000 'naira' (Nigerian currency) communally to have new wells dug and deposited it with government officials. However, the administrative procedures took so long that by the time government officials came to locate and dig the wells, the population had decided they would rather have a deep level borehole. Since this would cause a great deal more paperwork and cost more than the 6000 'naira' raised, the officials left to consult their supervisors. Relatively speaking the drilling is not expensive, but since water is essential for agriculture, some engineers found a profitable market. In addition, increased administrative procedures cause the prices to be

extremely high and prevent the participation of the villagers in decisions at the top.

When Michael Etherton's group of participants in Akpagher presented this problem in a critical way at an early stage during public rehearsals in the village square, there was a minor quarrel with the local Ibo policeman. He threatened to stop the performance for lack of a license. Although he could not carry out his threat because the Chief had already given his permission, the actors were afraid that the villagers might lose their 6000 'naira'. The group then faced the choice of whether to focus on something else, or whether to act out the problem in spite of the political risks. In the end, a number of workshop participants went to the local government officials to get some information. It became clear that no bribery was involved, and that the 6000 'naira' were neatly locked away somewhere in a safe. The play could go on. However, this shows how vulnerable this form of theater is. There are no strong political parties or unions who support it, or who protect the actors and community members from potential reprisals. Also it takes a lot of time to convince the audience that the actors are not hired as political fawners.

Finally Etherton's group of participants managed to engage the inhabitants of Akpagher in talk about their water problem. In the final presentation and during the public rehearsals the actors tried to make it impossible for their village informants

to be identified by the onlookers, so that the informants could not be traced. As a result of the information from villagers and from the local officials a potential solution at least to retrieve the 6000 'naira' was built in at the end of the play. In the closing scene the son of an illiterate farmer writes a letter to the political assembly representative of the village in the capital. The representative is asked to acquire further information about the deposit, with a threat implicit in the letter. The son writes that if the representative fails to respond within fourteen days, a delegation of 300 villagers will come to his house to offer him a petition while singing happy songs.

CONCLUSION

Because of its oral tradition, in most cases African theater is "epic theater"[8]. Theatrical art at the traditional courts dealt with cyclic heroic stories about gods, kings, and men. However, not only the content but also the way of acting and performing was epic in nature. The style of acting was, and still is, narrative, episodic, fragmentary, and participative. This is clearly indicated by the description of the Kwagh-hir performance. In the performances reported above there was a repeated use of these traditional and native elements. The informal Kwagh-hir organizations, musicians, singers, and drummers participated in

the performances. In one of the three plays there appeared an actor-narrator who glued the scenes together with comments. He introduced the play while arranging the necessary tables and chairs for that scene, telling what he was going to play and what the audience could expect to hear. This narrator also functioned as a sort of mediator between audience and players, representing the voice of the onlookers on stage. He functioned as a master of ceremonies or, in Boal's terminology, a "joker". How much audience and players are used to an oral instead of a written form of communication became clear during rehearsals and during the conversations of the actors with small groups of the audience. Often they literally remembered entire speeches which had sprung up in the previous days during rehearsals.

Given the strong cultural tradition of story-telling and theatrical performance among the Tiv, popular theater seems to be a particularly effective educational strategy. To ensure relevancy and to stimulate community interest, the plays must reflect local concerns in realistic ways. Therefore, participation of the community-audience in the development of the plays is crucial. In the case study presented here, participation was obtained in several ways. The process began with discussions in which Tiv community members and Workshop trainees explored local problems and concerns, which subsequently provided the content for the performances. Conducting public rehearsals and soliciting the comments

of passers-by further incorporated local input.

A related point of discussion on the approach sketched out in this paper is the double goal mentioned in the Introduction. On the one hand, such meetings stress the training or conscientization of the Workshop participants. The dialogue with the Tiv villagers and the theatrical production resulting from that functions as a learning process and as experimental ground for the trainees. On the other hand, emphasis is directly placed on the conscientization of the rural population--how to teach them to analyze in a critical way what constitutes their problems. Here the training of Workshop participants is secondary. The challenge is to strike a balance between these two goals.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

(1) The Tiv-culture has been described at length by Paul and Laura Bohannan. Also, the vision from within the Tiv-culture itself has excellently been put upon paper by Akiga in his Akiga's Story.

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(2) Epskamp, C.P.
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(3) Haghe[illegible] I.O.
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(4) According to Bohannan the word 'Kwagh' refers to a group of men who are united on the basis of mutual age. Generation conflicts are structurally built into the social organization of the Tiv who have a clear vertical organization of clan-chiefs and chiefs of the 'extended family', but also a horizontal organization of the age-groups.

Bohannan, L. and P. Bohannan.
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(5) Kidd, R.
"From Outside into Inside Out; The Benue Workshop on Theatre for Development."
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(6) 'Yam' is the staple-food of the Tiv. Traditionally they are only cultivated by women. The dignity of a woman is measured by the size of the yams she grows. The yam is a root-tuber which can be eaten at once. After peeling, it can be roasted, baked or boiled. The cooked yams are often dried and ground to flour. This is used to make warm flour-balls of which pieces are pulled--solely with the right hand--to serve as a spoon for eating the rest of the food.

(7) Traditionally the Tiv had savings-cooperatives. A number of people put money together and somebody was sent to buy the necessary things for communal use, if the financial situation permitted it. On this basis savings-cooperatives were founded at first to buy fertilizer. Then the members of these traditional savings-cooperatives saw profit in the transit-trade of fertilizer. In Nigeria (which imports all her fertilizers) the only way to buy fertilizer is through a traditional cooperative or a modern cooperation. The traditional cooperative with its limited membership bought more fertilizer than needed and sold it for double the price to non-members.

(8) Merchant, P.
The Epic.
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